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Inventory
for
Manuscript Collection
MS-455

Capt. James E. Creighton Papers
Inclusive dates 1883-1910
Bulk dates – 1902 to 1907

by
Tracy Lamaestra
Edited by Nathan R. Lipfert

April 2011

Number of boxes: 3
Accession # 2006.087.01

A PART OF THE CAPTAIN W. J. LEWIS PARKER BEQUEST

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Abstract

Creighton, James E. *Captain* (b 1861 –d 1948)

Papers, 1883-1910 (Bulk 1902-1907)

3 boxes

Ship captain, ship building supervisor and marine superintendent from Thomaston, Maine.

The papers of Captain James E. Creighton include correspondence with vessel owners, managers, captains, builders, contractors, repairers, suppliers, importers, dealers, manufacturers and inspectors. There are vessel documents of ownership, contracts, protests, store bills, receipts and dividend statements among others. Financial records include account summaries, account books, cash book, ledger and journal. The papers document two five-mast schooners for which Creighton supervised the construction, and a number of schooners of different sizes which Creighton commanded or owned shares in, including schooners of the William F. Palmer fleet. The collection has the following groups: Series I. Correspondence; Series II. Construction Records, Series III. Vessel Operation, Series IV. Miscellaneous.

Bequeathed by Capt. W. J. Lewis Parker in 2006.

MS-455, Accession # 2006.087.01

Related material in repository.

Finding aid in repository; folder level control.

Added Entries—Persons

Creighton, James E., *Captain*

Palmer, Frank A.

Palmer, William F.

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels)

Ella M. Watts (Three-mast schooner)

Fannie Palmer (I)(Five-mast schooner)

Fuller Palmer (Five-mast schooner)

Harwood Palmer (Five-mast schooner)

Jane Palmer (Five-mast schooner)

Lottie (Schooner)

Marie Palmer (Four-mast schooner)

Maude Palmer (Four-mast schooner)

May O'Neil (Three-mast schooner)

Paul Palmer (Five-mast schooner)

Percy & Small

Singleton Palmer (Five-mast schooner)

Susie M. Plummer (Four-mast schooner)

Umbajejus (Sloop, scow)

William F. Palmer

Added entries—key terms

Account books

Ship captains

Shipbuilding—Waldoboro (ME)

Ships—Equipment and supplies

Shipping

ACQUISITION

The papers of Captain James E. Creighton were bequeathed to Maine Maritime Museum from the estate of Capt. W. J. Lewis Parker in November and December 2006.

PROVENANCE

Capt. Lewis Parker picked up many of his maritime papers through dealers, auctions, estate sales or relatives of past maritime figures. Nevertheless, I cannot find any documentation on how he acquired these papers other than they were part of his maritime collection that he bequeathed to the museum.

RESTRICTIONS

There are no restrictions on the use of these materials for study or research.

PHYSICAL CONDITION

Other than the usual surface dirt and minor tears, the manuscripts in this collection are in good condition. Some documents are on fine tissue paper and should be handled with care. Overall, the papers of Captain James E. Creighton are in good condition.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Captain Creighton was born on July 16, 1861 in South Warren, Maine. He was the son of Joshua Jordan and Urania (Hathorne) Creighton. He had five siblings with only himself and his brother Samuel surviving into adulthood. The farm on which he was born was one of the 47 lots granted to the first Scotch-Irish settlers in 1736 by Samuel Waldo and drawn by lot at Pemaquid by his ancestor David Creighton. The property passed in his family from father to son for five generations until its sale in 1947. He grew up on the farm and attended the South Warren district school nearby. At age 15, he went to sea. First he was a ship's boy, then served time before the mast on square-rigged ships. He was also an apprentice under Captain David Rivers. At age 21, he became the master of the schooner *Lottie* and sailed on her for six years. Successively, he was in command of the *May O'Neil* (Three-mast schooner), *Susie M. Plummer* (Four-mast schooner), *Fannie Palmer* (I)(Five-mast schooner), *Harwood Palmer* (Five-mast schooner), *Dorothy Palmer* (Five-mast schooner), and *Ruth Merrill* (Six-mast schooner). During the years 1903-1904 he was in charge of the building of the five-mast schooners *Singleton Palmer* and *Harwood Palmer* in the George L. Welt yard at Waldoboro. He was later the Commodore Captain, so called, of the famous William F. Palmer fleet of schooners which operated between Southern coal ports and New England.

At the beginning of the World War I, he was appointed marine superintendent of the combined Palmer and Winslow fleet of large schooners then owned by France and Canada Steamship Co. At the close of the war, the Government had an overabundance of wooden vessels which had been built for emergencies. The decision was made to dispose of them, and Captain Creighton was commissioned for the task. He sank the ships in the Potomac River.

After 46 years at sea, during which he sailed in two, three, four, five and six-mast schooners, voyages to European, South American, and domestic ports, he retired. In 1922, he returned to his home in Thomaston. During his retirement he found an interest in making ship models. His models of the *A. G. Ropes* (Ship, built in Bath in 1884 and commanded by Captain David Rivers) and of the *Harwood Palmer* (Five-mast schooner) are now in the collections of this Museum. Moreover, he spent time in California and Florida. Captain Creighton died on January 11, 1948 in Miami, Florida. He is buried in the Thomaston cemetery.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTES

The Captain James E. Creighton papers consist of three boxes of manuscript records relating to Captain Creighton as a sea captain and shipyard supervisor. Much of the correspondence is between Captain Creighton and vessel owners, managers, captains, builders, contractors, repairers, suppliers, importers, dealers, manufacturers and inspectors. There are documents of ownership, contracts, protests, store bills, invoices, receipts, dividend statements and bulletins. There is a significant amount of correspondence between Capt. Creighton and William F. Palmer, owner and manager of the Boston-based coal-carrying fleet of fifteen four- and five-mast schooners. Vessel records in the collection include those for the *Ella M. Watts* (Three-mast schooner), *Fannie Palmer* (I)(Five-mast schooner), *Fuller Palmer* (Five-mast schooner), *Harwood Palmer* (Five-mast schooner), *Jane Palmer* (Five-mast schooner), *Lottie* (Schooner), *Marie Palmer* (Four-mast schooner), *Maude Palmer* (Four-mast schooner), *May O'Neil* (Three-mast schooner), *Paul Palmer* (Five-mast schooner), *Singleton Palmer* (Five-mast schooner) and *Susie M. Plummer* (Four-mast schooner). Of particular significance are the records of building the *Singleton Palmer* (Five-mast schooner) and the *Harwood Palmer* (Five-mast schooner).

Account summaries, account books, ledger, cash book, and a journal detail the financial scope of Captain Creighton's involvement in the shipping industry. Other miscellaneous documents such as a promissory note, a protest, store bills, receipts, cargo list, memorandum, trade ticket, figures and calculations, bulletins, advertisement and obituary add maritime interest to the collection.

ORGANIZATION

Series I. Correspondence
Box 1
Series II. Construction Records
Box 1
Box 2
Series III. Vessel Operation
Box 2
Box 3
Series IV. Miscellaneous
Box 3

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

Series I. Correspondence

The majority of the correspondence relates to Creighton's supervision of the construction of the five-mast schooners *Singleton Palmer* and *Harwood Palmer* at the George L. Welt shipyard in Waldoboro (ME). Both vessels were launched in 1904, and the vast majority of the correspondence carries 1904 dates. Most of the letters are incoming, although there are a few copies of outgoing letters. Some of the letters were originally sent to William F. Palmer in Boston, and evidently forwarded on to Creighton in Waldoboro. The largest file is the correspondence arriving direct from the William F. Palmer head office.

The letters are filed alphabetically by the author or company of origin. Firm names are filed purely alphabetically - A.B. Erskine, Dealer in Rough and Dressed Lumber, is filed under A. People's names are filed under the surname.

Series II. Construction Records

Documents in this series are non-correspondence manuscripts pertaining to the construction of the *Singleton Palmer* (Five-mast schooner) and the *Harwood Palmer* (Five-mast schooner). Much of it is financial accounts.

Series III. Vessel Operation

The files of this series are arranged chronologically. They pertain to the schooners which Creighton commanded and/or owned shares in. The types of documents include account books, a protest, dividend statements and bulletins from the managing owners, and other ownership documents.

Series IV. Miscellaneous

A category for documents the significance of which is uncertain: a promissory note, a handbill, a trade ticket, pages of notes and calculations.

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Captain James E. Creighton Papers
Container List

SERIES I. Correspondence

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	1	A. B. Erskine, Mar – Oct 1904
	2	A. N. Sprague, Oct 1902
	3	B. C. Jordan, Jul 1904
	4	Baldwin Fish Co., Sep – Nov 1904
	5	Bath Galvanizing Works, Oct – Nov 1904
	6	Burgess Fobes & Co., May 1904
	7	Central Wharf Towboat Co., Nov 1904
	8	Chas. P. McClellan, Sailmaker, Oct 1904
	9	Cooney, Eckstein & Co., May 1904, to William F. Palmer
	10	Curtis, A. K., Sep 1904
	11	D. M. Humphreys, Fire and Marine Insurance, Nov 1904
	12	Damariscotta Herald, Nov 1904
	13	Dingley, Capt., May 1904
	14	Farris, Fred, Aug 1904, to William F. Palmer
	15	Ferguson, Alexander, May 1904
	16	Fitch & Co., Ship Smiths, Sep – Oct 1904
	17	H. Pigeon & Sons, June 1904, to Mr. Welt
	18	Hazard Manufacturing Co., Aug 1904, to William F. Palmer
	19	Hyde Windlass Co., May – Nov 1904
	20	J. A. Allen & Co., Jul and Oct 1904
	21	J. S. Jackson & Son, Aug – Oct 1904, to William F. Palmer
	22	James Bliss & Co., Nov 1904
	23	Jameson, F. O., Jul 1904
	24	Knowlton Brothers, Sep – Oct 1904
	25	Littlefield, Attorneys and Counsellors at Law, Jun 1904
	26	M. G. Shaw Lumber Co., Nov 1904
	27	McFadden, Geo. A., Jan – Oct 1904
	28	Murphy Varnish Company, Jun 1904
	29	Muscongus Lumber Co., Jul 1904
	30	O. Sheldon Co., Jul 1904, to William F. Palmer
	31	Palmer, Frank A., Aug 1904
	32	Parris, F. W., Aug 1904
	33	Pennsylvania Iron Works Co., May 1907
	34	Percy & Small, Ship Builders and Repairers, Aug – Sep 1904
	35	Potter, W[oodbury]. A., Oct 1904
	36	Potter, W. H., *Captain,* May 1904
	37	R. L. Young, Apr – Aug 1904
	38	Silva, Jesi L., Oct 1904
	39	Steamboat Inspection Service, Department of Commerce and Labor, Nov 1904

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SERIES I. Correspondence (Continued)

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	40	Sultana-Arizona Copper Company, May 1907
	41	Swanton, Jameson Co., Apr – Nov 1904
	42	W. F. Stearns, Jul – Nov 1904
	43	W. H. Glover Co., Sep – Nov 1904
	44	W. L. Blake & Co., May – Jul 1904
	45	Wallace, Margaret H., Nov 1904
	46	Watson, Frye & Co., May – Sep 1904
	47	Willard, C. F., July 1904 and n.d.
	48	William F. Palmer [company/fleet], 1904 – 1908

SERIES II. Construction Records

***Singleton Palmer* (Five-mast schooner)**

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	49	Alterations to vessel contract, Oct 1902
	50	A. B. Erskine, invoice, ship timber, Oct 1903
	51	Fearing & Whiton & Co., invoices, chain and line, Feb 1904
	52	Memoranda of timber and treenails, Feb 1904

***Harwood Palmer* (Five-mast schooner)**

	53	American Bureau of Shipping, anchor certification, Aug 1904
	54	Lease of Reed yard, Apr – Oct 1904
	55	Palmer, Parker & Co., receipts for lumber, May 1904
	56	New Haven Iron & Steel Co., copies of orders and bills, Jul 1904
	57	Account summaries, Sep 1904
	58	James Bliss & Co., freight receipts, Sep – Nov 1904
	59	Knowlton Bros. agreements, May, Oct 1904
	60	J. M. Pottle, bills of lading, scow *Umbajejus*, Nov 1904
	61	Statement of cash account, Dec 1904
	62	Memoranda of top iron and timbers, n.d.
2	1	Cash Book, 1904
	2	Journal, 1904
	3	Ledger, 1904

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Captain James E. Creighton Papers
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SERIES III. Vessel Operation

Box#	Folder#	Title
2	4	Account Book, 1883 - 1890 *Lottie* (Schooner) *May O'Neil* (Three-mast schooner) *Ella M. Watts* (Three-mast schooner) *Susie M. Plummer* (Four-mast schooner)
	5	Account Book, 1888 - 1890 *May O'Neil* (Three-mast schooner)
	6	Protest *Lottie* (Two-mast schooner) collision with tug *Gertrude*
	7	Account Book, 1890 - 1900 *Susie M. Plummer* (Four-mast schooner)
	8	Sale of 5/16th of schooner, 1900 *Susie M. Plummer* (Four-mast schooner)
3	1	Bulletin No. 37, from dividend statement, Mar 1902 *Fannie Palmer* (I) (Five-mast schooner)
	2	Blank shareholder's certificate *Fuller Palmer* (Five-mast schooner)
	3	Cost account, Nov 1904 *Jane Palmer* (Five-mast schooner)
	4	Cost account, Dec 1904 *Harwood Palmer* (Five-mast schooner)
	5	Album of dividend statements, 1904 – 1910 *Harwood Palmer* (Five-mast schooner)
	6	Bulletin No. 5?, from dividend statements, n.d. *Marie Palmer* (Four-mast schooner) *Maude Palmer* (Four-mast schooner) *Fannie Palmer* (I) (Five-mast schooner)
	7	Shareholder's certificate, 1/64th to Marie E. Palmer, Apr 1903 *Maude Palmer* (Four-mast schooner)
	8	Declaration of trust, William F. Palmer, Aug 1902 *Paul Palmer* (Five-mast schooner)
	9	Ownership list, 1902 *Paul Palmer* (Five-mast schooner)
	10	Store bill, Palmer fleet, Jan – Sep 1908
	11	Miscellaneous papers, n.d.

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Captain James E. Creighton Papers
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SERIES IV. Miscellaneous

Box#	Folder#	Title
3	12	Figures, calculations, misc. notes, 188?
	13	Promissory note, Jan 1891, to May R. Creighton
	14	Handbill, Howard R. Spur & Co., Wholesale Grocers, Feb 1893
	15	Figures, calculations, 1893 - 1895
	16	Trade ticket, $10.00, n.d.